

The Oregonian.

PORTLAND, FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 1867.

THE WOOL PROBLEM.

The chief reason why the wool buyers of this coast hesitate to ship by sea is the fact that their wool will arrive so late in the Eastern market as to be met by the competition of wool from the entire country. A dealer in San Francisco says: "Should our wool go by water routes the three month delay means the loss of the best market, which is the early one. By the railroad our wool reaches the East in May and June, when the market is bare of wool."

It is in every way easier to ship the wool of this coast than to import English wool than by sea. Now the question is can the trade, under the limitation of the law, offer to the wool from the reman West to the East? Hitherto they have carried at moderately low rates; but now they have made the rates from these remote Western points higher, because, as they say, they cannot afford to reduce the rates from intermediate points—that is, from points in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, etc.—and therefore they have advanced the rates to us. Now it is a question for the commission to decide whether the rates which the roads pay are just or reasonable or not. If the service can not be rendered with a loss of reason-able or necessary profit, then the rates are not unreasonable; but if it can be rendered at less without such loss, then they are unreasonable. The sticking point is here: If rates are reduced to us, rates for all points along the lines must be cut so that at most they shall not exceed the same figures; and the roads claim that this would be loss of revenue that they could not stand. Investigation of this subject must follow appeal to the commission; that is, if the commission ever gets time to consider the appeal.

ALASKA AS A PENAL STATE.

There is a good deal of talk just now in the Eastern press about making Alaska a penal colony, place for the herding of all the outlaws of all the states in the Union. While the proposition is not likely to be carried out, it meets with much favor. The general idea is that the state would be impossible, that criminals once there could never return to prove completely. It seems also to be a common if not the general opinion that the country is worthless for any ordinary purpose, fit only for some extraordinary use like that of a national penal establishment.

The people of Oregon and Washington need not be told how mistaken their notions are. Alaska is quite as valuable for agriculture and for general habitation as the more northern countries of Europe. Its area of land adapted to agriculture is almost proportionate, but what the number of people can live in comfort as farmers. For stock there is wide range on the Aleutian islands and elsewhere. The resources of Alaska in timber, minerals and fisheries are simply beyond estimation. To devote a country so rich to an ignoble purpose would be shameful.

There would be no security whatever in the isolation of Alaska, which is accessible both by land and water. It would be quite as easy for a convict to escape to British Columbia or Oregon as it would be to pass from Oregon to California. There are no difficulties to stop a runaway man, and the result would be the permanent penal colony carried out, to overrun this northwestern country with escaped and desperate criminals. From the British penal settlements in Australia, convicts escaped in all directions, overrunning the whole southern archipelago. If hundreds of leagues of stormy ocean could not restrain desperate men, surely a few hundred miles of wilderness could not keep them back.

The Pacific Coast states will protest loudly against this scheme should it ever come into shape. British Columbia, too, will probably make her objections heard if any serious effort is made to set up a penal colony near her border.

THIS SINCERITY?

Eighty years ago the figures show that one-seventh of the population of the city of New York supported itself by the sale of ardent spirits. In Albany the proportion was one-fifth. And yet the prohibition people assert that intemperance is increasing in the land. Of course every man knows that no people can advance in intelligence, refinement and education as we have in fifty years and stand still in retrograde in temperament. Mr. Whitmore, of Astoria, quotes Gladstone as saying that "the evil results of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors are greater than the combined evils of war, pestilence and famine."

Probably Gladstone never said it, but if he did say it, he said what the statistics of men whose fanaticism does not tempt them to force liquor to do, he did not sustain. But suppose he did make this extravagant statement, what of it? Gladstone has never yet proposed prohibition as a legislative remedy or restraint, and Gladstone all his life has drunk wine at dinner, both in public and in private. Prohibition does in effect say a man shall drink, when it proposes to make it impossible for anybody, under the law, to buy wine or beer for his personal use. Suppose it were forbidden to manufacture or sell beer in Oregon, would it be no interference with the personal liberty of a man who was deprived enough to wish to eat wheat bread? It is man's right, driven out of Oregon to legally slake his thirst on such food and drink as he desires, is not that with the personal liberty of Philip Morris?

The St. Paul Pioneer Press explains clearly why a large vote for prohibition can almost always be polled, even in a community where very few men really have it. "The great majority, fearing temperance and honesty by the fanatics to vote for prohibition, are easily led to humor them by an act which wears the exterior of high and virtuous conduct. It is because prohibition is so plausible that it has always been strong at the polls. Even in states where prohibition law has become a mockery and a byword, it is next to impossible to get rid of it, since men fear the reproach of 'voting for whisky' more than they do the fact of freeing the whisky business from all effective restriction."

Mr. Franklin D. Smith, who was refused admission into Garfield Post, G. A. R., because of his color, writes a very sensible and manly letter about his rejection. His record shows that he was a soldier who saw real service, and it would be safe to say that the "comrades" who caused his rejection were pasteborder soldiers—men who were practically as inviolate in war as they are now inviolate in peace. It should be said, to the honor of the G. A. R., that ninety-five per cent of its members condemn this action of two or three negroes among them. All the country colored men are members of the G. A. R.; in an Eastern city it is unusual to find a dozen or twenty colored men in the membership of a single post. Membership in the G. A. R. is not a question of social equality at all. If it were, it would break up any post at once. The best thing Garfield post can do to expel the two or three "coarse-colors" who have persecuted the ushers and purveyors, and let Mr. Smith in.

Every day new interests are appealing to the interstate commission for redress. Among the latest is the New Almaden Quicksilver Company of California. This company represents to its trade is cut off by the long-and-short bill clause, and asks suspension thereof. Salt manufacturers of East Saginaw, Michigan, complain that they are practically shut out of the Chicago market by the law, and beg for a "repealation." These instances, from all parts of the country, are almost without number. New York, however, is satisfied.

The late Alexander Mitchell, of Milwaukee, belonged to the best class of men of business who make money honestly and honorably and use it wisely and virtuously. Mr. Mitchell in congress was an uncompromising hard

VOLUNTEER FIREFMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

DEATH OF A MEMBER REPORTED, AND ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR HIS FUNERAL.

A meeting of the Portland Volunteer Firemen's Association was held last night in the police court chamber. In the course of the meeting, and twelve persons were proposed for membership, it was reported that Jacob Graham, a man in good standing, had died yesterday morning at St. Vincent's Hospital. The association voted to bury the body of the deceased, and to contribute \$100 toward the expenses of the funeral. Members of the family of the deceased were present.

W. C. GOODIN, Front St., for further information.

NEW TO-DAY.

\$10 PRIZE FOR THE BEST INVESTIGATION.

WHICH GIVES A man a good home in two years.

THE money saved in rents is his own.

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